



**April 28 2026**

**The Honorable Chairman Stephen Casey**

Chair, Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

**Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee:**

On behalf of the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (RIMA), I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong opposition** to House Bill H7774.

This legislation would impose a statutory freeze on Rhode Island's ability to evolve its building and energy code framework—effectively locking the state into today's standards while the rest of the country continues to advance.

Rhode Island has long been recognized as a national leader in addressing climate change while embracing innovation, advanced energy technologies, and resilient infrastructure such as microgrids. That leadership has never been achieved by standing still—it has been driven by remaining aligned with evolving national standards and enabling new technologies to emerge, compete, and scale.

**H7774 does the opposite.**

It would prohibit Rhode Island from even considering future updates beyond the 2024 code cycle until 2030—disconnecting the state from the national model code development process and the innovation ecosystem that depends on it.

The **International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)** is the national baseline for energy performance. States do not build energy codes from scratch—they adopt and adapt these model codes through a transparent, consensus-driven process involving engineers, manufacturers, builders, and public stakeholders. Rhode Island already has a voice in that process.

If there are concerns with future versions such as the 2027 IECC, the appropriate venue is the public comment and consensus process—not a statutory prohibition that removes the state from participation entirely.

**What makes this legislation particularly troubling is that it runs counter to the position of leading national technical and industry organizations.**

Groups such as the National Electrical Manufacturers Association and ASHRAE—organizations that help define the very standards used across the United States—have consistently supported continued code evolution, modernization, and alignment with advancing technologies.

**When the organizations responsible for developing and implementing national standards oppose policies like this, it should give policymakers serious pause.**

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Freezing code development in statute is not a mainstream or pragmatic approach—it is an outlier position that disregards the expertise of the very institutions that underpin building safety, efficiency, and system performance nationwide.

The 2027 IECC, expected by December 31, 2026, is not a rigid mandate. It is increasingly **performance-based and flexible**, allowing builders and developers to meet measurable outcomes without prescribing a single technology path. That flexibility is critical—it enables innovation in advanced HVAC systems, smart building controls, distributed energy, storage, and microgrid integration.

H7774 would prevent Rhode Island from accessing these advancements and adapting them to local needs.

It would also create unnecessary fragmentation for manufacturers, contractors, and businesses that operate across multiple states—introducing uncertainty, increasing compliance costs, and undermining competitiveness.

Rhode Island should not be placing artificial constraints on its ability to modernize at a time when energy systems, building technologies, and economic conditions are evolving rapidly. Instead, the State Building Code Committee and existing expert-driven processes should be allowed to function as intended—reviewing new code editions, incorporating public input, and determining the most appropriate path forward for the state.

**In effect, H7774 substitutes a rigid statutory mandate for an expert-led, nationally aligned process. That is not modernization—it is regression.**

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Committee to **hold H7774 for further study**.

Rhode Island's competitiveness, innovation capacity, and leadership in energy and manufacturing depend on staying connected to—not disconnected from—the national standards that are shaping the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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